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C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 000257

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/C AND CA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2019

TAGS: [KCOR](#) [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CM](#)

SUBJECT: CAMEROON MP, ERSTWHILE US PARTNER, DEMOTED FOR  
ALIEN SMUGGLING

REF: YAOUNDE 74

Classified By: Political Officer Tad Brown for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary. President Paul Biya, enraged to learn that three senior members of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) were implicated in an alien smuggling operation, moved swiftly to remove them from their positions as Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, according to Gregoire Owona, the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in Charge of Relations with the National Assembly.

In a March 10 meeting with Poloff, Owona said Biya had still not decided whether the three should also be stripped of their parliamentary immunity to face criminal charges for their apparent involvement in an on-going scam to use the Caucus of Parliamentarians for Environmental Protection as cover for an extensive alien smuggling to the and other countries (reftel). End summary.

¶2. (C) CPDM MPs Rose Makia Abunaw, Paul Dinata and Mathurin Wa had been prominent CPDM officials and held three of the National Assembly's five Vice Presidency slots. Post's investigations revealed that Abunaw was at the center of the alien smuggling operation (reftel) and that Wa and Danata played peripheral, if any, roles, but Owona made clear that all three were removed because of their association with the affair. The CPDM has unchecked power in the National Assembly, and Biya is believed to exercise effectively absolute control over official CPDM decisions.

¶3. (C) Ambassador sent a letter on January 20 to Prime Minister Inoni, urging the Government of Cameroon to investigate the allegations that Abunaw had conspired to commit document fraud for the purposes of alien smuggling. Inoni subsequently confided to Ambassador that he had immediately briefed Biya, who had been incensed to learn of the allegations.

Comment: Action, Any Action  
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¶4. (C) We will continue to urge the GRC, through Inoni, Owona and our working-level contacts, to pursue those who are implicated in this blatant abuse of their official positions in the GRC, which reflects poorly on the GRC and has already caused us to exercise even more caution in our dealings--consular and otherwise--with it. Nonetheless, we are pleased that Abunaw was denied a chance to continue her position of leadership and encouraged to know that, despite pervasive corruption and fraud, Biya and the GRC can at times muster enough outrage to take some action against such criminal activity. End comment.

¶5. (U) Until this incident, Abunaw was "well and favorably" known to the Embassy and her NGO, the Caucus of Parliamentarians for Environmental Protection, received USG financial support from the Embassy and USAID as recently as ¶2006. Post will report further detail on the activities of

Abunaw's NGO septel.  
GARVEY